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approval of the Department of Justice, which will be obtained through the General Counsel. Any such claim that has not been collected in full and which has not been compromised, suspended or terminated will be referred by the Regional Counsel to the appropriate U.S. Attorney along with appropriate information necessary to protect the interest of the Government. A copy of the referral to the U.S. Attorney will be sent to the General Counsel's office.

(c) In a case where the Regional Counsel determines that a claim is appropriate under the provisions of § 17.48(g) of this chapter or 38 U.S.C. 1729, for the cost of medical, hospital, or surgical care, the Regional Counsel may assert the claim and collect payment in full. The Regional Counsel may compromise, settle, waive, suspend or terminate collection activity on any claim not exceeding \$100,000. Claims in excess of \$100,000 may only be compromised, settled, or waived with the approval of the General Counsel. Any such claim not compromised, settled, or waived or where collection action is not suspended or terminated will be referred to the appropriate United States Attorney with sufficient data to enable that office to protect the interest of the Government. A copy of all materials referred to the United States Attorney will be furnished the General Counsel.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1729(c)(1))

[42 FR 41418, Aug. 17, 1977, as amended at 43 FR 10560, Mar. 14, 1978; 51 FR 23227, June 26, 1986; 58 FR 39153, July 22, 1993; 61 FR 27785, June 3, 1996]

REPRESENTATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLAIMANTS; RECOGNITION OF ORGANIZATIONS, ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVES, ATTORNEYS, AGENTS; RULES OF PRACTICE AND INFORMATION CONCERNING FEES, 38 U.S.C. 5901-5905

§ 14.626 Purpose.

The purpose of the regulation of representatives is to ensure that claimants for Department of Veterans Affairs benefits have responsible, qualified representation in the preparation,

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presentation, and prosecution of claims for veterans' benefits.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 5902, 5903, 5904)

[68 FR 8544, Feb. 24, 2003]

§ 14.627 Definitions.

As used in regulations on representation of Department of Veterans Affairs claimants:

(a) *Accreditation* means recognition by the Department of Veterans Affairs of representatives, attorneys, and agents to represent claimants.

(b) *Agent* means a person who has met the standards and qualifications outlined in § 14.629(b).

(c) *Attorney* means a member in good standing of a State bar.

(d) *Benefit* means any payment, service, commodity, function, or status, entitlement to which is determined under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs pertaining to veterans, dependents, and survivors.

(e) *Cancellation* means termination of authority to represent claimants.

(f) *Claim* means application made under title 38 U.S.C., and implementing directives, for entitlement to Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, reinstatement, continuation, or increase of benefits, or the defense of a proposed agency adverse action concerning benefits.

(g) *Claimant* means a person who has filed or has expressed to a representative, agent, or attorney an intention to file a written application for determination of entitlement to benefits provided under title 38, United States Code, and implementing directives.

(h) *Complete claims service* means representation of each claimant requesting assistance, from the initiation of a claim until the completion of any potential administrative appeal.

(i) *Cross-accreditation* means an accreditation based on the status of a representative as an accredited and functioning representative of another organization.

(j) *Facilities* means equipment and furnishings that promote the efficient operation of an office, and adjacent accommodations, which are needed to facilitate access to office space.

(k) *Recognition* means certification by the Department of Veterans Affairs

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of organizations to represent claimants.

(l) *Representative* means a person who has been recommended by a recognized organization and accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(m) *State* includes any State, possession, territory, or Commonwealth of the United States, and the District of Columbia.

(n) *Suspension* means temporary withholding of authority to represent claimants.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 5902, 5903, 5904)

[53 FR 52419, Dec. 28, 1988, as amended at 68 FR 8544, Feb. 24, 2003]

§ 14.628 Recognition of organizations.

Authorized officers of an organization may request recognition by letter to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(a) *National organization.* An organization may be recognized as a national organization if:

(1) It was recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs prior to October 10, 1978, and continues to satisfy the requirements of § 14.628(d) of this section, or

(2) It satisfies the following requirements:

(i) Requirements set forth in paragraph (d) of this section, including information required to be submitted under that paragraph;

(ii) In the case of a membership organization, membership of 2,000 or more persons, as certified by the head of the organization;

(iii) Capability and resources to provide representation to a sizable number of claimants;

(iv) Capability to represent claimants before the Board of Veterans' Appeals in Washington, D.C.; and

(v) Geographic diversification, i.e., either one or more posts, chapters, or offices in at least ten states, or one or more members in at least twenty states.

(b) *State organization.* An organization created and primarily funded by a State government for the purpose of serving the needs of veterans of that State may be recognized. Only one such organization may be recognized in each State.

(c) *Regional or local organization.* An organization other than a State or na-

tional organization as set forth in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section may be recognized when the Department of Veterans Affairs has determined that it is a veterans' service organization primarily involved in delivering services connected with either title 38 U.S.C., benefits and programs or other Federal and State programs designed to assist veterans. The term *veteran* as used in this paragraph shall include veterans, former armed forces personnel, and the dependents or survivors of either. Further, the organization shall provide responsible, qualified representation in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for title 38 U.S.C., benefits.

(d) *Requirements for recognition.* (1) In order to be recognized under this section, an organization shall meet the following requirements:

(i) Have as a primary purpose serving veterans. In establishing that it meets this requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit a statement establishing the purpose of the organization and that veterans would benefit by recognition of the organization.

(ii) Demonstrate a substantial service commitment to veterans either by showing a sizable organizational membership or by showing performance of veterans' services to a sizable number of veterans. In establishing that it meets this requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit:

(A) The number of members and number of posts, chapters, or offices and their addresses;

(B) A copy of the articles of incorporation, constitution, charter, and by-laws of the organization, as appropriate;

(C) A description of the services performed or to be performed in connection with programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, with an approximation of the number of veterans, survivors, and dependents served or to be served by the organization in each type of service designated; and

(D) A description of the type of services, if any, performed in connection with other Federal and State programs which are designed to assist former